

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 369
By Hackworth

A RESOLUTION to honor and applaud John Rice Irwin for his active preservation of Appalachian history through the renowned Museum of Appalachia.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have helped to preserve the culture and heritage of an entire people, showing uncommon devotion and enthusiasm to a people of historical and cultural importance; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Museum of Appalachia Founder and Director, John Rice Irwin, who has dedicated his life to preserving Appalachian history so that this unique culture may inform and entertain generations to come; and

WHEREAS, this motivated and ambitious individual holds the strong conviction that the true breed of diminishing mountain folk of Southern Appalachia are among the most admirable people in the world, believing that as a people they are kind, gentle, and compassionate, yet tough and resourceful; and

WHEREAS, throughout his childhood, John Rice Irwin was intrigued by the Appalachian culture, an intrigue that began with his grandparents, all of whom were descendants of pioneers who settled in Big Valley in East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, due to a love and appreciation for his ancestors and a suggestion by his grandfather, Mr. Irwin started visiting the remote hills and isolated hollows of Southern Appalachia in search of interesting items and unusual mountain relics made, used, mended, and cherished by this fascinating group of people; and

WHEREAS, the Museum of Appalachia opened in the late 1960s with one log building, the General Bunch House, on a two-acre plot. Today the museum has grown to sixty-five acres,

including dozens of authentic log structures, a large display building, extensive craft, gift, and antique shops, a restaurant, the Mountain Heritage Room, the popular Appalachian Hall of Fame Building, and the People's Building, all of which contain over a quarter million items; and

WHEREAS, John Rice Irwin had very specific ideas about how the museum would look, not wanting a sterile, cold, lifeless museum but a "lived-in" look that was alive with authenticity. It was his goal to make the General Bunch House, the Arnwine Cabin, and the other dwellings appear "as though the family had just strolled down to the spring to fetch the daily supply of water;" and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Mr. Irwin has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his peers, colleagues, and the public; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Mr. Irwin for his dedication to the conservation of Appalachian history; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and applaud John Rice Irwin on his hard work and diligence in preserving the unique and wonderful culture that is Appalachia through the establishment of the Museum of Appalachia and offer our thanks for enabling so many to be enriched by the observation of the history and founding fabric of this great State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.